HABS No. OH-2276

Newton Township Building
East side of South Main Street,
100 feet south of Hill Street
Pleasant Hill
Miami County
Ohio

0410, 55-PLEAH

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
MID-ATLANTIC REGION, NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA 19106

HABS OHIO 55-PLEAH

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

NEWTON TOWNSHIP BUILDING

HABS No. OH-2276

Location:

Lot #26 (East side of South Main Street, 100 feet south

of Hill Street), Pleasant Hill, Miami County, Ohio

USGS Pleasant Hill Quadrangle, Universal Transverse

Mercator Coordinates: 16.726560.4436520

Present Owner:

Village of Pleasant Hill, Ohio Inc.

8 West High Street

Pleasant Hill, Ohio 45359

Present Use:

Vacant (Demolition pending)

Significance:

The Secretary of the Interior has determined that the Newton Township Building is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places due to its local architectural and historical significance. As one of the town's few public buildings, it has served as the center for civic and social activities. The building, completed in 1910 and designed by Edward James Mounstephen, is also a good example of the Classical Revival Style of architecture

within the local context.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

- 1. Date of erection: 1909-1910. A photostatic copy of the original contract between the contractor and owners stated that all work on the building was to be fully completed and ready for acceptance by the 1st day of September, 1910. The "AD NEWTON TOWNSHIP 1910" appearing above the main entrance on the face of the structure appears to confirm this date of erection.
- 2. Architect: Edward James Mounstephen. Sole source of reference is the mention of his name in the aforementioned contract. No biographic information could be located.
- 3. Original and subsequent owners: The following is an incomplete chain of title to the land on which the Newton Township Building stands, being Lot Numbered Twenty-six (26) and also Twenty-eight (28) feet taken by parallel lines off the North side of Lot Numbered Two Hundred Thirty-one (231) in the said Village of Pleasant Hill, said lots being shown and designated on Plat recorded in Plat Book 2, Page 240. ALSO: a strip of ground six (6) feet in width taken by parallel lines off the west end of Lots Numbered Forty-four (44) and One Hundred Eighteen (118) in said Village of Pleasant Hill. Reference is to the Recorder's Office of Miami County, Ohio.
 - 1909 Deed, recorded September 8, 1909 in Book 138, page 408.
 R.W. Brandon
 To
 Trustees of Newton Township
 - 1957 Deed, recorded January 15, 1957 in Book 341, page 207.
 Trustees of Newton Township
 To
 George L. Warner
 - 1967 Deed, recorded May 24, 1967 in Book 439, page 81. George L. Warner To Charles R. Morris and Robert D. Gradsky
 - 1970 Deed, recorded July 23, 1970 in Book 473, page 601. Charles R. Morris To Robert D. Gradsky
 - 1970 Deed, recorded July 23, 1970 in Book 473, page 604.
 Robert David Gradsky
 To
 Robert David Gradsky by Trustee
 - 1971 Deed, recorded December 22, 1971 in Book 486, page 49. Robert David Gradsky by Trustee To

James H. and Edna Harmon

1985 Deed, recorded December 3, 1985 in Book 582, page 301.

James H. and Edna M. Harmon

To

Village of Pleasant Hill, Ohio Inc.

The following is a chain of title to the third story of the Newton Township Building. Reference is to the Recorder's Office of Miami County, Ohio.

- 1911 Deed, recorded May 8, 1911 in Book 143, page 608.
 Trustees of Newton Township
 To
 Pleasant Hill Lodge No. 574 I.O.O.F.
- 1955 Quit-Claim Deed, recorded January 5, 1955 in Book 321, page 458. Pleasant Hill Lodge No. 574 I.O.O.F.

 To

 Rosezella Rebekah Lodge No. 753 I.O.O.F.
- 1957 Quit-Claim Deed, recorded January 15, 1957 in Book 341, page 205. Rosezella Rebekah Lodge No. 753 I.O.O.F.

 To
 George L. Warner
- 4. Contractor: The Daniel Moul Lumber Company of Pleasant Hill, Ohio (information from photostatic copy of original contract). Daniel Moul was awarded the contract for construction of a public hall and office building on December 21st, 1909 by the Newton Township Trustees and the Pleasant Hill Lodge No. 574 of the Independent Order of Odd Fellows (I.O.O.F.)

Daniel Moul, born in York, Pennsylvania on September 13, 1854, first appeared in the 1910 Miami County Census as a resident of Pleasant Hill. He and his wife, Martha Ann Moul, resided in a rented home on Monument Street, with their three sons and two daughters (one son being deceased).

As related in the <u>Centennial History</u> of Troy, Piqua, and Miami County, the Daniel Moul Lumber Company, dealers in lumber, builder's hardware, glass and paint, was a large business and employed a number of men.

5. Original plans and construction: The cost of materials and labor, according to the original contract, was \$19,138.00. Of this amount, Newton Township paid \$15,309.25 for the first and second floors of the structure, while the I.O.O.F. contributed the remaining \$3,828.75 for the third story.

A one-cent post card (date and source unknown) shows that the front of the building was essentially as it presently appears, although in considerably better repair. However, the rear portion of the building originally had a two-story extension which housed the auditorium stage. Remnants of the original foundation still outline this portion

of the structure.

6. Alterations and additions: As related by Almeda and Edward Stout, use of the building declined as the various events were moved to newer facilities elsewhere. The Trustees decided the structure could house township vehicles, and a portion of the auditorium was therefore razed with a large back door being installed for access. The auditorium seats and other interior furnishings were also removed to provide space for storage (exact dates unknown). Under private ownership, physical evidence indicates that nearly all interior features have been removed.

B. Historical Context:

For many years, the Newton Township Building was the center for many cultural, civic, and social functions. Although the sequence of events is unclear due to lack of documentation, the variety of activities reflects the relationship of this structure to its community.

The first floor auditorium, complete with a large stage and second story balcony, seated more than three hundred individuals and saw a multitude of activities throughout its history. Community functions included variety shows, musical entertainment, local plays, and even a traveling medicine show. For a period of time, it served as a Saturday night movie theater and hosted the Farmers' Institute each February. This facility was also the site for class plays and high school graduations until a new school was built in 1923-24. The two smaller front rooms served as polling places on election day. Behind the balcony on the second floor were additional meeting rooms utilized by various community groups throughout the years.

First reference to "Newton Township Building" as the primary name for this structure is found in the 1911 deed which transferred ownership of the third story to I.O.O.F. Lodge No. 574. In addition to lodge meetings, this large ballroom with a kitchenette and dining facilities hosted frequent dances. Alumni banquets were even held here after completion of the new school until the School Board decided to allow dancing.

But the needs of this small community were gradually changing, as was the demand for such a large public facility. The Newton Township Trustees, facing increased expenses for repair and upkeep, sold the building to a local resident, George L. Warner, in 1957. Mr. Warner also purchased the third floor from the Rosezella Rebekah Lodge No. 753, which had obtained it from the I.O.O.F. Lodge No. 574 just two years earlier.

For the past twenty-eight years, each of the private owners has unsuccessfully attempted to make use of this structure. Since it is presently just a gutted remnant of the original building, the Village of Pleasant Hill acquired it in 1985 with the intent of demolishing the structure and creating a scenic park area for this community of 1051 residents.

Prepared by: John H. Thomas

Title: Mayor

Affiliation: Village of Pleasant Hill, Ohio

Date: December 6, 1985

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

- 1. Architectural character: Built on Main Street (State Route 48) in the second block south of the center of town, the Newton Township Building is an outstanding twentieth century building of the village. This neo-Classical structure with its three centered ornamental cut limestone arch was once a significant Pleasant Hill landmark.
- Condition of fabric: The exterior stone and brick is apparently sound, but the roof is in need of repair. Interiors have been neglected and are in disrepair. The sloping floor of the auditorium, the stage, and other decorative elements throughout the structure have been removed.

B. Description of Exterior:

- 1. Overall dimensions: This rectangular shaped building, which is forty-eight feet and one inch (48'1") in width and ninety-eight feet and one inch (98'1") in depth, features a central limestone three centered arched entrance as the front facade with large square windows on each side. The building consists of three stories, rising to a height of approximately forty-five feet (45'). A basement is located below the front portion of the structure.
- 2. Foundation: The twenty-two inch (22") thick poured concrete is smoothfacing, scored above grade to resemble smooth stone. The top four inch (4") outer edge is sloped except where the masonry pilasters occur.
- 3. Walls: Exterior walls are masonry construction of seventeen inch (17") thickness for two stories and of thirteen inch (13") thickness above the second floor, including the decorative parapet wall. Stone quoins are located above both large windows and at either end of first story front facade. Exterior brickfacing consists of 2½" X 8½" hard pressed brick laid in red colored mortar with three-sixteenths inch (3/16") tooled joints. All backup material is of solid hard brick.
- 4. Structural system: All exterior walls are of brick load-bearing construction with masonry pilasters twenty-five inches (25") in width and spaced fourteen feet (14') on center. All load-bearing interior walls are also of masonry construction. Non-bearing interior walls are of wood studs. Floor joists are 2" X 12" located sixteen feet (16') on center. The third floor ballroom is supported by heavy beams spaced fourteen feet (14') on center. Subfloor is laid diagonally over the floor joists and covered with finished maple hardwood flooring.
- 5. Stoop: Six concrete steps lead to a small poured concrete stoop where doors open into both side rooms as well as the main lobby.

- 6. Chimney: One square chimney of masonry construction is located on the south side of the structure.
- 7. Openings: All doors and frames are of varnished molded wood with bronze hardware (where still intact). All windows are double hung with wood frames. Large front windows have steel lintels and stone jack arches. Smaller windows also have steel lintels, those on the third floor with circular arch and the side elevation windows with segmental arch lintels (refer to attached sketch plans for location of exterior doors). A fire escape runs from the third story to grade level on the south exterior of the structure. Stairs also lead from a basement door to grade level.
- 8. Roof: Pitch roof is supported by wood trusses fourteen feet (14') on center and consists of wood sheathing covered with built up roofing. Rafters are 2" X 10" located sixteen inches (16") on center. A built-in gutter runs the full length of the building and is drained with downspouts on both exterior side elevations.

C. Description of Interior:

- 1. Floor plans: A basement, which housed mechanical system, is located under the front portion of the building. The first floor consists of a lobby, offices, stairway and checkroom. The lobby provides access to the auditorium, which has a sloping floor and once had a large stage to the rear. The stairway leads to a smaller lobby on the second floor. In addition to the full-width auditorium balcony constructed of wood with a decorative wooden railing, four smaller rooms and a booth are located on this level. The third story is reached by the extended stairway and consists of several smaller rooms and one large ballroom (refer to attached sketch plans for appropriate dimensions).
- Stairways: One wood stairway, with an ornamental wooden rail (most of which is now missing), connects all three stories. A smaller stairway leads from the basement to the first floor (refer to attached sketch plans for location).
- 3. Flooring: Flooring is of 3/4" X 2½" tongue and grooved finished maple hardwood, except that terrazzo is found in the first floor lobby. The auditorium flooring has been completely removed.
- 4. Wall and ceiling finish: Smaller rooms have wood lath and plaster walls and ceilings. The remaining walls are plastered, with wood base and ornamental three-foot-high dado. The main lobby ceiling consists of an elaborate metal coffered design painted in various colors. With the exception of several smaller rooms noted above, the remaining primary rooms and main stairway have metal coffered ceilings. The ceiling of the auditorium is also metal coffered, with elaborate metal squares from which the lighting fixtures once hung.
- 5. Openings: The doors and frames are of molded wood and varnished. All windows are wood double hung sash. Trim is stained and varnished 1" X 5" pine.

- 6. Decorative features and trim: (described above)
- 7. Hardware: The hardware still intact is bronze throughout the structure.
- 8. Mechanical equipment: The heating was provided by a coal fired boiler and radiators (which are now missing). The ventilating system is also no longer intact. Electrical wiring was of the knob and tube type, but all original lighting fixtures have been removed. A commode and lavatory are all that remain of the plumbing system.
- 9. Original furnishings: The only piece of historic interest to be located is the original ticket tray for seating in the auditorium. Owned now by Mr. Edward Stout, this tray indicates that the three seating sections on the first floor of the auditorium consisted of approximately two hundred and eighty-six (286) seats.

D. Site:

- General setting and orientation: The Newton Township Building is located in a residential area of South Main Street. The structure faces west and occupies much of the lot on which it is erected. Approach to the main entrance is immediately adjacent to the sidewalk. A north-south alley also runs just east of the structure.
- 2. Historic landscapes design: (none)
- 3. Outbuildings: (none)

Prepared by: Ferdinand E. Freytag, A.I.A. Title: Architect Affiliation: Retired Date: December 6, 1985

PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

- A. Architectural drawings: Although the architectural drawings and specifications have not been located, the original contract did note several changes including a concrete floor and step in the vestibule instead of marble and stone, the raising of all foundation walls one foot higher than provided in the plans, the use of Toledo brick except for face brick and pilasters, and concrete basement walls and partition.
- B. Historic view: The post card depicted in the photostatic documentation is on file in the Village Office located at 8 West High Street, Pleasant Hill, Miami County, Ohio.
- C. Interview: An interview of Edward B. and Almeda Stout was conducted at their home by Pleasant Hill Mayor, John Thomas on December 3, 1985 and provided most of the historic information for this documentation. Mrs. Stout graduated from Newton High School in 1921, and Mr. Stout, now in his eighties, has lived in Pleasant Hill his entire life. Handwritten notes by the Stouts of their recollections of the Newton Township Building are on file at the aforementioned Pleasant Hill Village Office.

D. Bibliography:

1. Primary and unpublished sources:

Village of Pleasant Hill, Ohio. Village Office. "Contract" [for Construction of Public Hall and Office Building]. 21 December 1909. Photocopied.

Miami County, Ohio. Recorder's Office. "Deeds." Book 138, 143, 321, 341, 439, 473, 486, 582.

2. Secondary and published sources:

Department of Commerce and Labor-Bureau of the Census. "Thirteenth Census of the United States: 1910-Population." Enumerated on 20 April 1910. (Microcopy T624 Roll 1215)

Harbaugh, Thomas C. <u>Centennial History: Troy, Piqua and Miami County, Ohio.</u> Chicago: Richmond-Arnold Publishing Co., 1909.

Hill, Leonard. A History of Miami County, Ohio: 1807-1953. Columbus, Ohio: F.J. Heer Printing Co., 1953.

All three of these sources are located in the Harper Cultural Center, 301 West Main Street, Troy, Ohio.

- E. Likely sources not yet investigated: Additional information may be obtained by researching Miami County newspaper articles.
- F. Supplemental material: Photostatic copy of contract executed for construction of the Newton Township Building, referenced in Part I "Historical Information," is on file in the Pleasant Hill Village Office and is attached at the end of this documentation.

Prepared by: Deborah A. Millhouse

Title: Director

Affiliation: Miami County Development Department

Date: December 6, 1985

PART IV. PROJECT INFORMATION

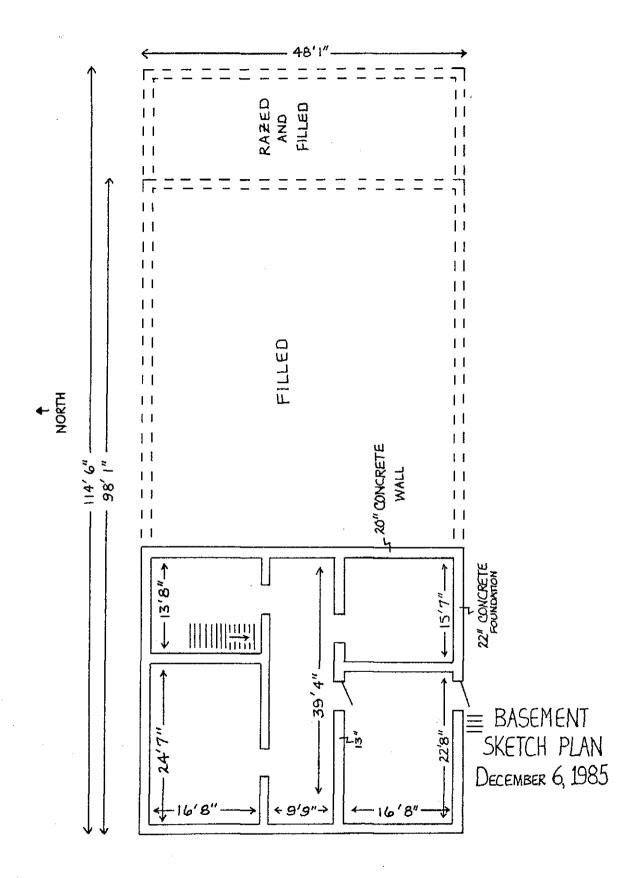
The proposal by the Village of Pleasant Hill for demolition of the former Newton Township Building was selected by Miami County to be a part of its Fiscal Year 1984 Community Development Block Grant program, as submitted October 10, 1984 and as executed with the Ohio Department of Development on December 14th, 1984.

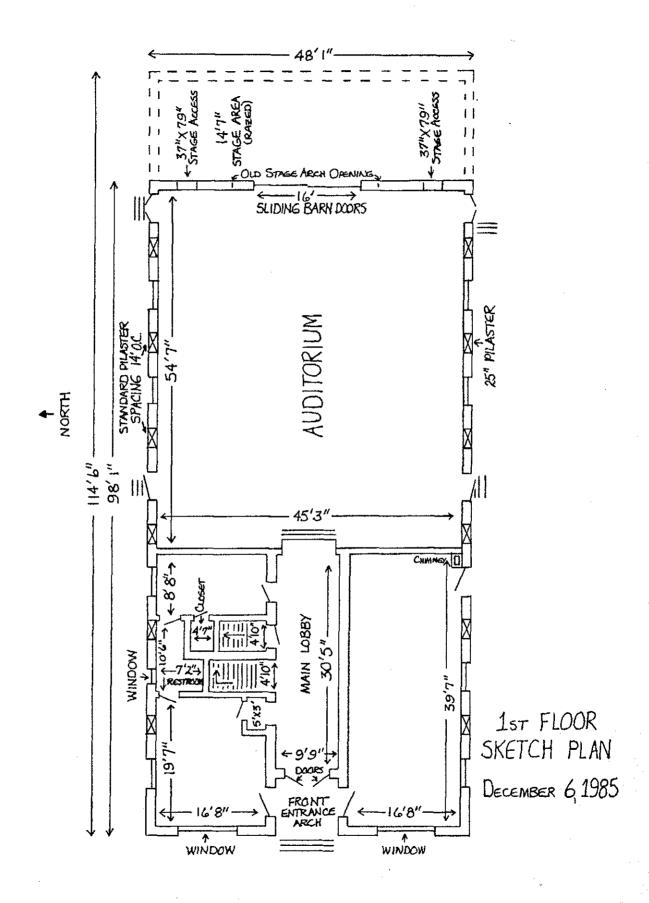
Prepared by: Deborah A. Millhouse

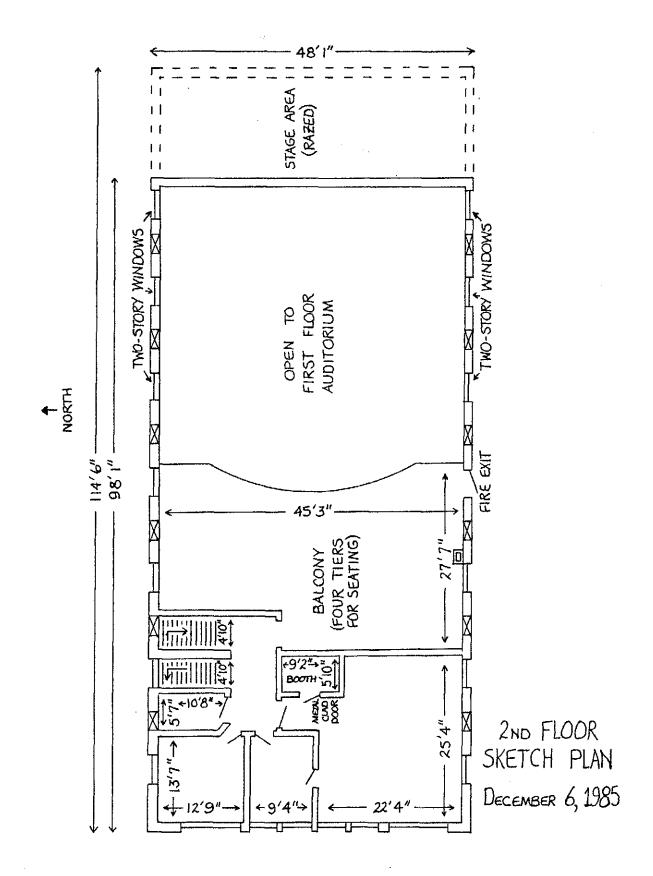
Title: Director

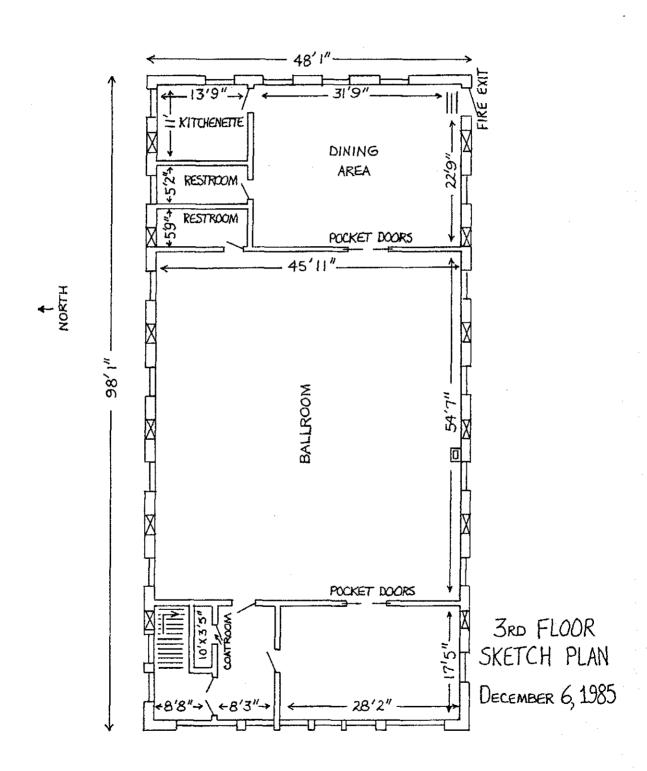
Affiliation: Miami County Development Department

Date: December 6, 1985









Compared to View in congress on coming

CONTRACT

THIS AGREEMENT, made the part of December, in the year one thousand nine hundred and nine (1909) by and between the Daniel Moul Lumber Company, of Pleasant Hill, Ohio, (a corporation organized under the laws of Ohio), party of the first part (hereinafter designated the Contractor), and Newton Tewnship, hiami County, State of Ohio and I. O. O. F. Lodge of Pleasant Hill, Onto parties of the second part (hereinafter designated the Owners)

WITNESSETH that the Contractor, in consideration of the agreements herein made by the Owners, agrees with the said Owners agree follows:

Marticle I. The Contractor shall and will provide all the materials and perform all the work for the complete construction of the joint Public Hall and Office Building, with Lodge Room attached, except the heating and furnishings as shown on the drawings and described in the specifications prepared by Edward James Mounstephen, Architect, which drawings and specifications are identified by the signatures of the parties hereto, and become hereby a part of this contract.

parties hereto that the work included in this contract is to be done under the direction of the said Architect, and that his decision as to the true construction and meaning of the drawings and specifications shall be final. It is also understood and agreed by and between the parties hereto that such additional drawings and explanations as may be necessary to detail and illustrate the work to be done are to be furnished by said Architect, and they agree to conform to and abide by the same so far as they may be consistent with the purpose and intent of the original drawinge and specifications referred to in Article I.

It is further understood and agreed by the parties hereto that any and all drawings and specifications prepared for the purposes of this contract by the said Architect are and memain his property, and that all charges for the use of the same, and for the services of said Architect, are to be paid by the said Owners.

Article III. No alterations shall be made in the work except upon written order of the Architect; the amount to be paid by the Owners or allowed by the Contractor by virtue of such alterations to be stated in said order. Should the owners and Contractor not agree as to amount to be paid or allowed, the work shall go on under the order required above, and in case of failure to agree, the determination of said amount shall be referred to arbitration, as provided for in Article XII of this contract.

Article IV. The Contractor shall provide sufficient, safe and proper facilities at all times for the inspection of the work by the Architect or his authorized representatives; shall, within twenty-four hours after receiving written intige from the Architect.

to that effect, proceed to remove from the grounds or buildings all materials condemmed by him, whether worked or unworked, and to take down all portions of the work which the Architect shall by like written notice condemn as unsound or improper, or as in any way failing to conform to the drawings and specifications, and shall make good all work damaged or destroyed thereby.

Article V. Should the Contractor at any time refuse or neglect to supply a sufficiency of properly skilled workmen," or of materials of the proper quality, or fail in any respect to prosecute the work with promptness and diligence, or fail in the performance of any of the agreements herein contained, such refusal, neglect or failure being certified by the Architect, the Owners shall be at liberty, after three days written notice to the Contractor, to provide any such labor or materials, and to deduct the cost thereof from any money then due or thereafter to - become due to the Contractor under this contract; and if the sufficient ground for such action, the Owners shall also be at liberty to terminate the employment of the Contractor for the said work and to enter upon the premises and take possession, for the purpose of completing the work included under this contract, of all materials, tools and appliances thereon, and to employ any other person or persons to finish the work, and to provide the materials therefor; and in case of such discontinuance of the employment of the Contractor it shall not be entitled to receive any further payment under this contract until the said work shall be wholly finished, at which time, if the unpaid balance of the amount to be paid under this contract shall exceed the expense

Article VI. The Contractor shall complete the several portions, and the whole of the work comprehended in this Agreement by and at the time or times hereinafter stated, to-wit: the work all to be done with all possible haste consistent with good workmanship, and without any unnecessary delay, and to be fully completed and ready to be accepted by the Architect and the said Owners by the 1st day of September, 1910,

incurred by the Owners in finishing the work, such excess shall be paid by the Owners to the Contractor; but if such expense shall exceed such unpaid balance, the Contractor shall pay the

as herein provided, either for furnishing materials or for finishing the work, and any damage incurred through such default, shall be audited and certified by the Architect, whose certificate there-

The expense incurred by the Owners'

difference to the Owners.

of shall be conclusive upon the parties.

Article VII. Should the Contractor be delayed in the prosecution or completion of the work by the act, neglect or default of the Owners, of the Architect, or of any other contractor employed by the Owners upon the work, or by any damage caused by fire or other casualty for which the Contractor is not responsible, or by combined action of workmen in no wise caused by or resulting from default or collusion on the part of the Contractor, then the time herein fixed for the completion of the work shall be extended for a period equivalent to the time lost by reason of any or all

the causes aforesaid, which extended period shall be determined and fixed by the Architecture presented in writing to the Architect within forty-eight hours of the occurrence of such delay.

Article VIII. The Owners agree to provide all labor and materials essential to the conduct of this work not included in this contract in such manner as not to delay its progress, and in the event of failure so to do, thereby causing loss to the Contractor, agree that they will reimburse the Contractor for such loss; and the Contractor agrees that if it shall delay the progress of the work so as to cause loss for which the Cwners shall become liable, then it shall reimburse the Cwners for such loss. Should the Owners and Contractor fail to agree as to the amount of loss comprehended in this Article, the determination of the amount shall be referred to arbitration as provided in Article XII of this contract.

Article IX. It is hereby mutually agreed between the parties hereto that the sum to be paid by the Owners to the Contractor for said work and materials shall be Nineteen Thousand One Hundred Thirty-sight (\$19,138.00) Dollars. The Township of Newton, Miami County, Ohio to pay \$15,309.25 of said amount for first and second floors and the Pleasant Hill Lodge I. O. O. F. to pay \$3,828.75 as hereinbefore provided, and that such sum shall be paid by the Owners to the Contractor, in current funds, and only upon certificates of the Architect, as follows:

ist payment of \$1000.00 when the first floor joists are set, 2d payment of \$3000.00 when the Second floor joists are set, 3d payment of \$3000.00 when the third floor joists are set, 4th payment of \$5000.00 when building is plastered; balance less ter per cent. When building is completed,

The final payment shall be made within thirty days after the completion of the work included in this contract, and all paymente shall be due when certificates for the same are issued.

If at any time there shall be evidence of any lien or claim for which, if established, the Owners of the said premises might become liable, and which is chargeable to the Contractor, the Owners shall have the right to retain out of any payment then due or thereafter to become due an amount sufficient to completely indemnify them against such lien or claim. Should there prove to be any such claim after all payments are made, the Contractor shall refund to the Owners all moneys that the latter may be compelled to pay in discharging any lien on said premises made obligatory in consequence of the Contractor's default.

Article X. It is further mutually agreed between the parties hereto that no certificate given or payment made under this contract, except the final certificate or final payment, shall be conclusive evidence of the performance of this contract, either

wholly or in part, and that no payment shall be construed to be an acceptance of defective work or improper materials.

Article XI. The Owners shall during the progress of the work maintain insurance on the same against loss or damage by fire, the cost of same to be paid by the Contractor, the policies to cover all work incorporated in the building, and all materials for the same in or about the premises, and to be made payable to the parties hereto, as their interest may appear.

Article XII. In case the Owners and Contractor fail to agree in relation to matters of payment, allowance or loss referred to in Articles III or VIII of this contract, or should either of them dissent from the decision of the Architect referred to in Article VII of this contract, which dissent shall have been filed in writing with the Architect within ten days of the announcement of such decision, then the matter shall be referred to a Board of Arbitration to consist of one person selected by the Owners, and one person selected by the Owners, and one person selected by the Contractor, these two to select a third. The decision of any two of this Board shall be final and binding on both parties hereto. Each party hereto shall pay one-half of the expense of such reference.

Article XIII. The following thanges are made in the construction provided for in the specifications and agreed to by the parties hereto, with no additional costs added to the price herein, the charges having squalized each other:

The floor and step in the vestibule of the building to be

made of concrete, instead of marble and stone.

All foundation walls to be raised one foot higher than provided in plans.

All brick used in building, except face brick and pilasters to be of Toledo brick.

Basement walls and partition to be of concrete, instead

The said parties for themselves, their heirs, successors, executors, administrators and assigns, do hereby agree to the full performance of the covenants herein contained.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the parties to these presents have hereunto set their hands and seals, the day and year first above written.

Melyarlindale

The Daniel Moul Lumber Company,

By Daniel Moul

.

_,Beg'y

Contractor.

Newton Township, Niami County, Ohio,

By March Leonard

Attest:

Dectar

Board of Trustees,

Committee

Den Jinner